

North Dakota Bowhunters Association Position on lighted nocks.

The discussion at our annual meeting in Grand Forks in April 2009, covered many of the positive aspects of a lighted nock. These included increased ability to see the hit or miss, ability to find the arrow after the shot, all hopefully increasing the chance to recover a hit animal. The discussion included the fact that Pope and Young will not accept applications for animals taken with lighted nocks or other electronics on the bow or arrow.

One of the big considerations was that we have gone from a hunter success rate of an estimated 10% (no good records were kept hence an estimate) 20 years ago to a hunter success rate closing on an estimated 35% - 50% today. A look at the P & Y records shows the number of P & Y bucks being taken in ND has increased significantly over even 10 years ago. Our bowhunter numbers have also increased but not in percentage terms as to the percentage of P & Y bucks being taken. NDBA is presently working on the numbers so we get a better understanding of the increasing success rate. What this has lead to is increasing calls for limits on the archery season, limits on tags and drawing for archery tags because archery is becoming successful enough to have an impact on management. We need to better understand the reasons for that increased success on the deer herd and especially big bucks and its relationship to increasing technology.

NDBA believes the majority of bowhunters are out for the experience of the hunt. Yes, we want to take a big animal also but the time and experience is more important to most. So the issue that faced NDBA membership was how do we maintain that quality hunt and opportunity? After discussion, it was pretty easy to see that most of the members at the annual meeting favored the quality hunt and lengthened opportunity to be in the field over the increase in success that technology can help provide.

While NDBA recognizes that illuminated nocks have some advantages for deer recovery, it is a step toward electronics on the bow and arrow, which can also include a GPS sending unit so if the arrow remains in the deer it can be found with certainty. There is also a push to put crossbows into the archery season. Are these directions archers want to go? The majority of members at the meeting decided it was not. That discussion included high tech compound shooters as well as the archers who shoot lower tech equipment. The lighted nock issue is not simple and is one that NDBA, NDG&F and all archery hunters will need to continue to wrestle with.